

CHAPTER I

Introduction

A. Project Sponsor and the Project

Pacific Thomas Capital has submitted an environmental review application to the City of Oakland for the Gateway Community Development Project, (referred to throughout this document as “proposed project” or “project”), which would incrementally demolish nearly 103,000 square feet of existing development and construct a new residential and commercial mixed use project of up to 810 residential units and approximately 26,000 square feet of commercial space. Development would occur within the six primary buildings and a series of townhomes on approximately 9.7 acres. Construction would take place in six phases, with the six development sites being developed over a period of 15 to 20 years.

Pacific Thomas Capital, a project sponsor and applicant of the proposed project, is generally referred to throughout this document as “project sponsor” or “project applicant.” The approximately 9.7-acre project site consists of several contiguous properties along the south side of East 12th Street, north of the Union Pacific railroad tracks, between approximately 26th Avenue and Derby Avenue.¹ The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) currently controls approximately 1.8 acres in the southeast corner of the project site, and nearly 0.5 acres at the northeast corner of the site is privately owned and not yet acquired by the project sponsor. The Oakland Redevelopment Agency is working with the project sponsor to acquire the Caltrans portion of the project site.

B. Environmental Review

Subsequent to receiving and reviewing the project sponsor’s application for environmental review, the City determined that preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was warranted. The City also decided at the outset to study all potential impacts associated with the project and therefore did not narrow the scope of environmental topics to be analyzed in the EIR through preparation of an Initial Study for the project. This EIR addresses each environmental topic for which the project could result in a physical environmental effect.

Consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code Section 21000, et seq. and Section 15000, et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations) promulgated thereunder (together, “CEQA”), this EIR is a public information

¹ Following City of Oakland’s convention, East 12th Street and International Boulevard and parallel streets run east-west, and 29th Avenue and Fruitvale Avenue run north-south.

document prepared for use by governmental agencies and the public to identify and evaluate potential environmental consequences of the proposed project, to evaluate and recommend mitigation measures that would substantially lessen or eliminate significant environmental adverse impacts, and to examine a range of feasible alternatives to the project. The information contained in the EIR is subject to review and consideration by the City prior to a decision to approve, reject, or modify the proposed project, and any other responsible agency.

On November 25, 2005, the City issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to governmental agencies, organizations, and persons interested in the project, previously referred to as “The Gateway Project.” The NOP is included in this Draft EIR as **Appendix A**. The NOP requested that agencies with regulatory authority over any aspect of the project describe that authority and identify the relevant environmental issues that should be addressed in the EIR. Interested members of the public were also invited to comment. This Draft EIR addresses those responses to the NOP that involved environmental issues associated with the project site and proposed project. Comment letters received in response to the NOP are provided in **Appendix B** to this EIR. Please refer to the notice provided in the front of this document for specific locations or contact information.

The Draft EIR is available for public review for the period identified on the notice provided in the front of this document. During this time, written comments on the Draft EIR may be submitted to the City of Oakland Community and Economic Development Agency, Planning Division, at the address indicated on the notice. Oral comments may be submitted at the public hearing on the Draft EIR, which shall be held as identified on the notice provided in the front of this document. Responses to all comments received on the environmental analysis in the Draft EIR and submitted within the specified review period will be prepared and included in the Response to Comments / Final EIR.

C. Organization of the Draft EIR

Following this **Introduction** chapter, this Draft EIR is organized as follows:

The **Summary** (Chapter II) contains an executive summary of the proposed project and allows the reader to easily reference the analysis of the environmental effects, proposed mitigation measures, and standard conditions of approval, and residual environmental impacts after mitigation, if any. **Table II-1**, Summary of Impacts, Mitigation Measures, Standard Conditions and Residual Impacts, is provided at the end of Chapter II as a reader-friendly reference. Chapter II also summarizes the alternatives to the project analyzed in the EIR to potentially reduce or avoid significant effects of the project. (The detailed impact analysis of the project and the project alternatives are contained in Chapters IV and V of the document, respectively.)

The **Project Description** (Chapter III) describes the project location, the project characteristics, the objectives of the project, the anticipated development phasing, a list of the City’s required project approvals, and other agencies that must consider aspects of the project.

Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures (Chapter IV) contains a discussion of the setting (existing physical conditions and regulatory framework), the environmental impacts (including cumulative impacts), both adverse and non-adverse, that could result from the project, and the mitigation measures or standard conditions of approval that would reduce or eliminate those impacts which are identified as adverse.

Alternatives (Chapter V) evaluates a range of alternatives to the proposed project and identifies an environmentally superior alternative.

Impact Overview and Growth-Inducing Impacts (Chapter VI) summarizes the potentially significant and unavoidable impacts and cumulative impacts of the proposed project (identified throughout Chapter IV) and describes the project's potential for inducing growth.

Report Preparation (Chapter VII) identifies the authors of the EIR. Persons and documents consulted during preparation of the EIR are listed at the end of each analysis section in Chapter IV.

Appendices to the EIR are provided at the end of this document and include the NOP as well as certain supporting background documents and technical reports used for the impact analyses for specific topics. All reference documents used to prepare the EIR analysis are listed at the end of each analysis section in Chapter IV (Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures) and are available for review by the public at the City of Oakland Community and Economic Development Agency, Planning and Zoning Division, under reference Case Number ER05-001, located at 250 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Suite 3315, Oakland, California, 94612.

